

Purpose The STAI is a 40-item questionnaire designed to measure two aspects of anxiety: the temporary and episodic form of anxiety that fluctuates across situations and circumstances, and the stable personality traits that predispose individuals to anxiety in general [1]. Though the scale has been widely used in research, it is also a valuable clinical tool. The STAI's two subscales make it ideal for sleep specialists hoping to identify both current recurring anxiety problems in order to address their influence on sleep quality.

Population for Testing Normative data is available for adults aged 19–69 as well as for high school students [2]. A children's version is also available for ages 6–14 years.

Administration The scale is a self-report, paper-and-pencil measure requiring between 10 and 15 min for completion. Administrators are required to possess at least some university-level training in psychometric testing, or relevant field experience.

Reliability and Validity In 2002, Barnes and colleagues [3] conducted a review study in which they examined all articles published over the previous decade reporting reliability for the STAI. The mean internal consistency was .91 for the state scale and .89 for the trait scale. The mean test-retest reliability for the trait scale was .88. As anticipated, the mean for the state scale was lower (.70), reflecting

the transitory nature of the measure. Developers Spielberger and colleagues [4] have also demonstrated good concurrent validity, as scores on the STAI correlate highly with results found on alternative anxiety measures like the Anxiety Scale Questionnaire.

Obtaining a Copy The scale can be purchased from a variety of psychological assessment outlets.

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Scoring The two subscales of the STAI are completed and scored in much the same way. For the state section, respondents use a four-point, Likert-type scale to indicate how accurately statements regarding tension and anxiety apply to them at that moment. Scales range from 1 (“not at all”) to 4 (“very much so”). The trait section offers a similar four-point scale, but instead focuses on how respondents feel in general. The scale for this section ranges from 1 (“almost never”) to 4 (“almost always”). Scores are totaled to provide a global score for each subscale. Normative data, T-scores, and percentiles ranks are available for a variety of age ranges. A scoring key can be purchased alongside testing materials to speed the administration process.

References

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Representative Studies Using Scale

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